

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1 - 19. (canceled)

20. (currently amended) A kit for detecting ~~two~~ four or more different ~~target analytes~~ cytokines in a serum or plasma sample, the kit comprising:

(a) solid supports that are classifiable into subgroups, each subgroup differentiable from others by a differentiation parameter and each subgroup capable of having immobilized thereon a capture reagent that binds to a different ~~target analyte~~ cytokine;

(b) a predetermined amount of one or more concentrated materials that collectively or separately contain the four or more different cytokines; and

(~~b~~ c) a standard diluent comprising serum or plasma that normally contains the four or more different cytokines but that is substantially free of the ~~two~~ four or more different ~~target analytes~~ cytokines;

in which the standard diluent is produced by removing the ~~two~~ four or more different ~~target analytes~~ cytokines from the biological fluid by affinity chromatography or is obtained from a biological fluid of a host having the biological fluid substantially free of the ~~two~~ four or more different ~~target analytes~~ cytokines.

21. (original) The kit in accordance with claim 20, wherein the differentiation parameter is color or fluorescence of the solid supports.

22. (original) The kit in accordance with claim 20 in which the solid supports are microparticles.

23. (currently amended) The kit in accordance with claim 20 in which the capture reagent for each ~~target analyte~~ cytokine is immobilized on each subgroup of the solid supports.

24. (currently amended) The kit in accordance with claim 20 in which the standard diluent is produced by removing the ~~two~~ four or more different ~~target analytes~~ cytokines from the serum or plasma by affinity chromatography.

25. (currently amended) The kit in accordance with claim 20 in which the standard diluent is obtained from a host's serum or plasma that is substantially free of endogenous quantities of the ~~two~~ four or more different ~~target analytes~~ cytokines.

26. (original) The kit in accordance with claim 20 in which the serum or plasma for the standard diluent is obtained from human or mouse.

27. (canceled)

28. (currently amended) The kit in accordance with claim ~~27~~ 20 in which the cytokines are selected from interleukins, lymphokines, interferons, colony stimulator factors, platelet-activating factors, and/or tumor necrosis factors

29. (currently amended) The kit in accordance with claim ~~27~~ 20 in which the target analytes are ~~two~~ four or more of IL-2, IL-4, IL-6, IL-8, IL-10, GM-CSF, TNF- α , and INF- γ .

30. (canceled)

31. (currently amended) The kit in accordance with claim 20, the kit further comprising detection reagents that bind to the ~~target analytes~~ cytokines.

32. (withdrawn) A method of conducting a simultaneous assay for two or more target analytes in which a standard diluent is used to dilute one or more reference standards, the method comprising using as the standard diluent a biological fluid substantially free of the two or more target analytes.

33. (withdrawn) The method in accordance with claim 32 in which the assay is conducted for the target analytes in a first biological fluid, and the diluent comprises a second biological fluid comprising essentially the same matrix components as the first biological fluid, the second biological fluid being substantially free of the two or more target analytes.

34. (withdrawn) The method in accordance with claim 33 in which the second biological fluid is obtained by screening a series of biological fluids and identifying one or more biological fluids containing the two or more target analytes at a concentration below a predetermined threshold.

35. (withdrawn) The method in accordance with claim 33 in which the second biological fluid is obtained by treating a biological fluid to remove the target analytes so as to decrease the concentrations thereof to concentrations below predetermined thresholds.

36. (withdrawn) The method in accordance with claim 35 in which the target analytes are removed by affinity chromatography.

37. (withdrawn) The method in accordance with claim 36 in which the target analytes are removed by contacting the biological fluid with antibodies that bind to the target analytes.

38. (withdrawn) The method in accordance with claim 33 in which the biological fluid is selected from interleukins, lymphokines, interferons, colony stimulator factors, platelet-activating factors, and/or tumor necrosis factors.

39. (withdrawn) The method in accordance with claim 33 in which the two or more different target analytes are cytokines.

40. (withdrawn) The method in accordance with claim 33 in which the cytokines are selected from interleukins, lymphokines, interferons, colony stimulator factors, platelet-activating factors, and/or tumor necrosis factors.

41. (withdrawn) The method in accordance with claim 40 in which the target analytes are two or more of IL-2, IL-4, IL-6, IL-8, IL-10, GM-CSF, TNF- α and/or INF- γ .

42. (withdrawn) A method of preparing a standard diluent for use in a simultaneous assay for two or more target analytes, comprising treating a biological fluid

containing the target analytes to remove the target analytes so as to decrease the concentrations thereof to concentrations below predetermined thresholds.

43. (withdrawn) The method in accordance with claim 42 in which the target analytes are removed by affinity chromatography.

44. (withdrawn) The method in accordance with claim 43 in which the target analytes are removed by contacting the biological fluid with antibodies that bind to the target analytes.

45. (withdrawn) The method in accordance with claim 42 in which the biological fluid is selected from interleukins, lymphokines, interferons, colony stimulator factors, platelet-activating factors, and/or tumor necrosis factors.

46. (withdrawn) The method in accordance with claim 42 in which the two or more different target analytes are cytokines.

47. (withdrawn) The method in accordance with claim 46 in which the cytokines are selected from interleukins, lymphokines, interferons, colony stimulator factors, platelet-activating factors, and/or tumor necrosis factors.

48. (withdrawn) The method in accordance with claim 47 in which the target analytes are two or more of IL-2, IL-4, IL-6, IL-8, IL-10, GM-CSF, TNF- α and/or INF- γ .

49. (currently amended) A kit according to claim + 20 in which the biological fluid normally includes from ~~two~~ four to fifty different ~~target analytes~~ cytokines but is substantially free of the from ~~two~~ four to fifty different ~~target analytes~~ cytokines; and

the predetermined amount of one or more concentrated materials collectively or separately contain the from ~~two~~ four to fifty different ~~target analytes~~ cytokines.

50. (currently amended) A kit according to claim + 20 in which the biological fluid normally includes from ~~three~~ four to twenty different ~~target analytes~~ cytokines but is substantially free of the from ~~three~~ four to twenty different ~~target analytes~~ cytokines; and

the predetermined amount of one or more concentrated materials collectively or separately contain the from ~~three~~ four to twenty different ~~target analytes~~ cytokines.

51. (currently amended) A kit according to claim ~~4~~ 20 in which the biological fluid normally includes from four to fifteen different ~~target analytes~~ cytokines but is substantially free of the from four to fifteen different ~~target analytes~~ cytokines; and

the predetermined amount of one or more concentrated materials collectively or separately contain the from four to fifteen different ~~target analytes~~ cytokines.

52. (currently amended) A kit according to claim ~~4~~ 20 in which the biological fluid normally includes eight different ~~target analytes~~ cytokines but is substantially free of the eight different ~~target analytes~~ cytokines; and

the predetermined amount of one or more concentrated materials collectively or separately contain the eight different ~~target analytes~~ cytokines.

53. (canceled).

54. (currently amended) A kit according to claim 52 in which the eight ~~target analytes~~ cytokines are IL-2, IL-4, IL-6, IL-8, IL-10, GM-CSF, TNF- α and INF- γ .

55 - 68. (canceled)

69. (currently amended) The kit in accordance with claim ~~64~~ 20 in which the ~~two~~ four or more different cytokines are mixed together to form a single concentrated material in part (b).

70. (currently amended) The kit in accordance with claim ~~64~~ 20, the kit further comprising instruction materials for using the standard diluent to produce a series of control materials comprising different concentrations of the cytokines.

71 - 99 (canceled) 100. (new) A kit according to claim 20 in which the diluent is selectively substantially free of the four or more different cytokines.

101. (new) The kit in accordance with claim 100 in which the standard diluent is produced by selectively removing the four or more different cytokines from the serum or plasma by affinity chromatography.

102. (new) The kit in accordance with claim 100 in which the standard diluent is obtained from a host's serum or plasma that is substantially free of endogenous quantities of the four or more different cytokines.